



2020 PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANTS REPORT

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Burnaby is located on the ancestral and unceded homelands of the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh and hə́n̓qəmiñəh̓ speaking people, and is the third most populated urban centre in British Columbia with more than 233,000 residents. Burnaby is a diverse community within a rapidly growing metropolitan area. The Burnaby of today is characterized by high density residential areas and major commercial town centres blended with an abundance of parks and dedicated green space, rapid transit, high technology research and business parks, comprehensive industrial estates and major post-secondary institutions.

Burnaby's population is growing:

- The population increased by 4.3% from 2011 to 2016 (232,755), and the *Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy* projects that Burnaby's population will reach 277,700 in 2021 and 345,000 in 2041;
- From 2011 to 2016, Burnaby's senior population grew by 19%;
- Burnaby's Indigenous population grew by 27% in the same time-period.

More Burnaby residents are immigrants than are non-immigrants:

- In 2016, just over 50% of Burnaby residents were immigrants;
- 14.1% of Burnaby's population immigrated to Canada during the previous 10 years;
- A majority of Burnaby residents (56.4%) have a mother tongue other than English, and 34.6% most often spoke a language other than English or French at home.

While Burnaby's diversity and the variety of languages spoken in Burnaby is one of this city's greatest assets, it does pose a significant challenge for the library – in terms of collections, programming and staffing. BPL is fortunate to be a member of Public Library InterLINK and reciprocal borrowing helps BPL address some of the demand for materials in languages other than English. BPL's participation in the NewtoBC initiative, funded initially by the Province of BC through Welcome BC and now by the federal government, has also greatly contributed to BPL's ability to serve people who speak and read in languages other than English. The Library Champions project has been particularly important to BPL's ability to connect with community members, and the Library Champions themselves have been powerful advocates. In addition, BPL works closely with settlement-serving agencies in Burnaby and other community partners to provide programming in several languages, including Chinese and Korean. The library actively seeks people with proficiency in languages in addition to English when recruiting new staff.

ABOUT BURNABY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Burnaby Public Library empowers the community to engage with and share stories, ideas and information. Our dream is a welcoming community where all people can explore, learn and

connect. Our four library branches offer books, magazines, DVDs, audiobooks and other materials in a dozen different languages. Through www.bpl.bc.ca, Burnaby residents can download free e-books and audiobooks, stream independent films and music, and access online magazines and newspapers.

Our innovative programming for children, teens and adults provides opportunities for more people in our community to interact with ideas and with each other, and seeks to excite and engage people's curiosity and imagination. We offer in-person programs at all four of our branches, including storytimes for babies, toddlers and families, Man in the Moon for male caregivers, and bilingual ASL storytimes. The Library is a gateway to literacy and online learning, and we provide opportunities for learning in-person through classes and individual help, and online through databases that help people learn a language or develop software, business and creative skills.

BPL's branches are important public spaces, meeting places and centres for discovery and dialogue. We provide access to computers and Wi-Fi, and our expert staff help people access the information that they need for work and study, and to navigate essential services online. Library staff work outside our branches too. The Home Library and Accessible Service Department provides personalized service and an exclusive collection of library materials to patrons who are unable to come to our branches due to health reasons or a physical disability; we visit private residences, care facilities, assisted living spaces and other institutions, and through services such as NNELS offer materials in alternative formats to clients who are print-disabled. BPL offers services to newcomers to Burnaby through partnerships with immigrant service organizations, and through our Library Champions program, which trains community members to connect newcomers with library programs and services. And our pop-up libraries, outreach van and Burnaby Public Library enable staff to reach community members at neighbourhood events, schools, farmers' markets and other community gathering spaces.

Guided by a board of citizen volunteers appointed by City Council, the Library is an integral part of the services offered to Burnaby residents. These dedicated board members work to ensure that the Library supports the City's goals and contributes to making Burnaby an outstanding place to live, learn, work, invest and play.

BPL STRATEGIC GOALS

The 2019-2022 BPL Strategic Plan looks outward to our community and inward to our capacity to develop services that support our community's needs. The Board outlined four main priorities:

- Connect with Community
- Encourage curiosity and exploration
- Create welcoming and innovative spaces
- Invigorate people and culture

In 2020, priorities shifted as the community and the library shifted to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

ADDRESSING STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Provincial funding has helped Burnaby Public Library to address our community's priorities, in line with the strategic priorities identified in *BC's Strategic Plan for Public Library Service*.

Elimination of Late Fines

BPL Goal: Connect with Community

Libraries Branch Strategies: Improving access for British Columbians; Advancing citizen engagement

Burnaby is a stronger community when everyone can freely access resources and information, at every stage of life. In July, BPL stopped charging for overdue items and eliminated existing late fines. The BPL Board made the initial decision to eliminate late fines in July 2019, and Burnaby City Council supported the initiative by providing an additional \$165,000 in revenue in BPL's annual budget from 2020 onwards.

We knew from the work of our librarians in the community, and from stories that staff heard in the library, that fines present a significant barrier to library use. Vulnerable populations are disproportionately impacted by overdue fines and in many cases simply stop using the library. For example:

- People with mental health or cognitive issues can have difficulty managing due dates
- Children and teens lack the financial ability to pay fines and the independent mobility to visit the library to return materials on time
- For people living in poverty, overdue fines can quickly become a financial burden
- People with limited digital literacy or access to technology have fewer opportunities to receive notification of upcoming due dates
- People with privilege and English language fluency are more likely to approach staff to ask for fine reduction or forgiveness

BPL staff also shared stories about the impact of late fines, and the impact of removing late fines:

- In May 2019, community librarians visited a food bank where a client had fines on his and his wife's card waived. The couple had hit a "difficult patch" and the fresh start meant they could use the library again. They are now active library users and have been borrowing movies.
- In February 2019, a visit at a conversation circle led to an interaction where overdue fines were waived. The patron "appreciated that the staff understood me when we talked about a fine on my card and they waived it." The patron hadn't been able to talk to staff in the branch due to language barriers.
- In 2018, a librarian at a public event met a professor who had stopped using the library five years ago because of the fines on her card from borrowing books for her children. She still had the library card in her purse but was no longer using it. She told the librarian that being charged for encouraging her children to borrow many books was unfair.

- In 2018, a community leader who was interviewed as part of the strategic planning process said that when her children were young she had stopped them from borrowing library books as busy family life made it difficult to keep track of due dates and the family could not afford overdue fines.

New Website

BPL Goal: Create Welcoming and Innovative Spaces

Libraries Branch Strategies: Improving access for British Columbians; Advancing citizen engagement

BPL launched a new website in December 2020. The new site is structured for how people use the library, rather than how the library is organized. It emphasizes people and help, uses plain language to describe services and collections, and aims to make everything the library does more accessible. It also includes faster search and improvements for people who use mobile devices.

The screenshot shows the BPL website homepage. At the top left is the BPL logo. The navigation bar includes 'People & Help', 'Things to Borrow', 'Things to Use', and 'Activities & Events'. On the right, there are links for 'Shortcuts', 'Search', and 'Language'. Below the navigation is a row of eight icons representing different services: Welcome Desk, Information & Research Help, Reading Recommendations, BPL for Teens, BPL for Kids, Home Delivery & Accessible Service, Community Resources Guide, and FAQ. The main content area features a 'Welcome Desk' section with a photo of a smiling staff member. Below the photo is a green box with the text 'New to BPL? We're happy to see you! There's so much you can do at the library.' and a 'Learn More' button. To the right of the photo are three columns of text: 'Contact Us' (We're here to help you find books and information, explain how the library works and hear your feedback. Ask and we'll respond!), 'What's New?' (Get our latest updates, and browse new items added to the library.), and 'Find your BPL Branch' (See where we're located, when we're open and what makes each branch special.).

We launched the site with a feedback form and are encouraging visitors to let us know what works, and what doesn't. Some positive comments received so far:

- I already placed a hold on a book I saw on one of the home page carousels... good marketing. I love the top navigation bar. The icons are obvious and it stays visible after you choose something. I also like the clear headings and simple explanations.
- It looks very good, and I like the font! And I love how you can search for anything.
- Nicely done - it is so bright and welcoming!

We've had critical feedback too, mostly from regular users noticing that a few of their favourite things have moved off the top menu. We are continuing to monitor feedback and make adjustments as themes emerge.

Transgender Inclusion Working Group

BPL Goal: Invigorate people and culture
Libraries Branch Strategies: Building capacity

In August 2019, BPL formed a Transgender Inclusion Working Group to identify barriers trans and nonbinary staff and patrons face in the library and to make recommendations to remove these barriers. The group was successful in installing "trans people welcome" signage on washrooms, removing deadnames from patron records, and delivering professional gender diversity training for 170 staff. Some of the changes to make the library more trans inclusive have had the added benefit of increasing equity, diversity and inclusion for other vulnerable groups, such as a new policy that anyone can get a library card without showing legal identification. Along with these cultural changes came many challenges and organizational obstacles, including training management as subordinates; assessing staff understanding; supporting staff in explaining trans inclusive signage to patrons; handling internal criticism of the working group's existence; accessing the community with outreach; and examining our room booking policies. The group consists entirely of non-supervisory staff, which gave the group a unique perspective as well as some valuable learning opportunities.

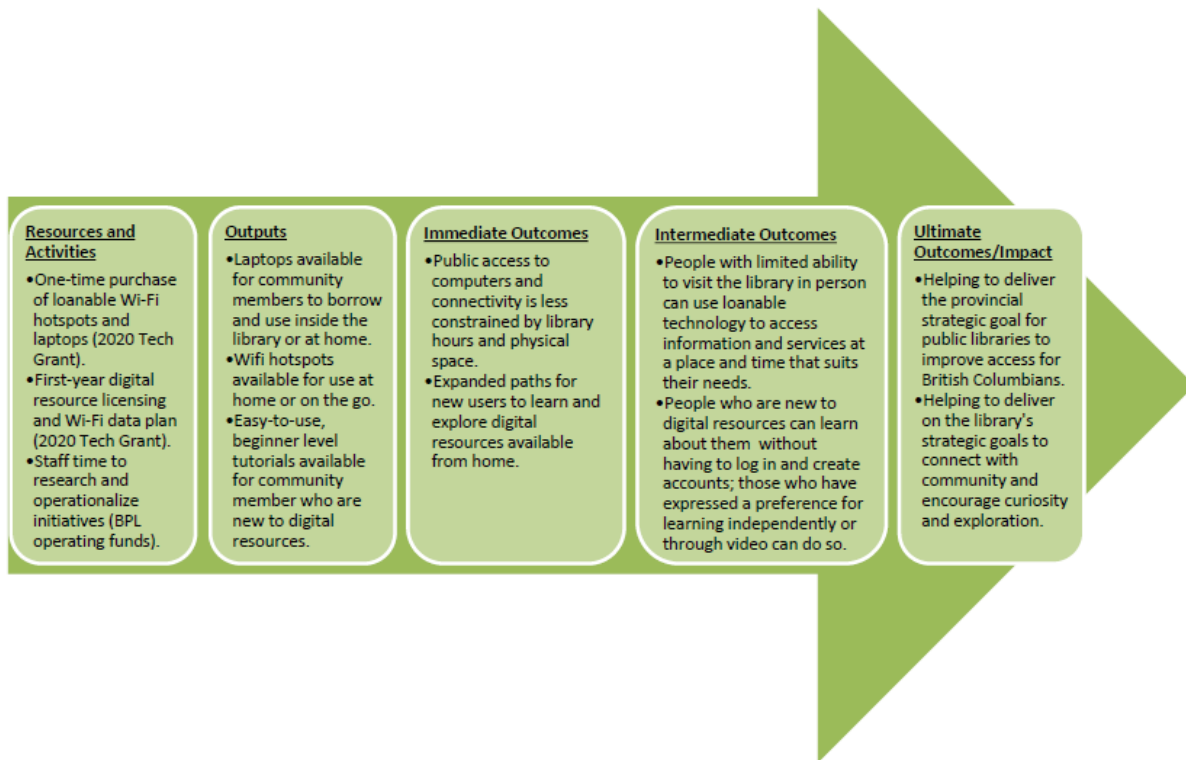
TECHNOLOGY GRANT

Burnaby Public Library received a one-time grant of \$42,270 from the Ministry of Education in 2020 to be used for planning, developing and improving the library's digital resources and services, and technical infrastructure. The timing and intent of the grant aligned with the library's community development approach to serving Burnaby residents during the pandemic. With this funding, we've been able to increase access to technology and connectivity during a time when digital inclusion is most critical.

The grant is funding three initiatives that respond to identified community needs:

1. Laptop lending: this \$12,500 project makes laptops available to community members to use inside or outside the library, extending computer access both inside and outside library spaces.
2. Wi-Fi hotspot lending: this \$25,000 project makes Wi-Fi hotspots available for use at home and on the go. Community members can borrow Wi-Fi hotspots at library branches, or by connecting with a community librarian.
3. Niche Academy: this online training platform offers easy-to-use, beginner level tutorials for digital resources, creating a way in for community members who are just getting to

know digital resources available to them from the library. The technology grant is funding the first year of this resource at BPL, at a cost of \$4,800.



COVID-19 IMPACT AND RESPONSE

COVID-19 had a significant impact on library services, both in terms of activity levels of traditional services and in development of new services. Closure of library branches in mid-March resulted in a sharp downturn in most activities. Once BPL began offering paper bag pick up in June, and then limited reopening of physical spaces in July, visits and checkouts of books and other materials began to rebound, and continued to do so to varying degrees throughout the rest of 2020. In general:

- In-person visits, patron questions, and computer use remain low – at 40-50% of pre-COVID activity levels
- Circulation of physical materials has rebounded to about 75% of pre-COVID activity
- In-person programs and meeting room rentals remain suspended

Shifting Focus to Community Work

In March 2020, when closing our doors to the public limited our options, the library connected with service providers, attended community meetings, and created collaborative projects with key agencies following an approach based on equity and inclusion. These important connections led us to urgent needs in the community around technology and digital access, food security, and social isolation. For the rest of the year, staff created and adapted services to

solve these community needs, including visits to local food banks with wifi hotspots to provide connectivity, a community guide on our website with services available in Burnaby during the pandemic, online train-the-trainer sessions for service providers on digital solutions to serve their clients, and targeted literacy programs for vulnerable residents. As a result, we were able to expand our partnerships, redefine and be redefined by the audiences we serve, train staff on community development goals and techniques, create targeted content, and update and enhance BPL's community profile.

Library Collections

COVID-19 presented significant collections-related challenges in 2020. Temporary library closures and the need for community members to stay at home resulted in an immediate and unprecedented demand for digital resources. E-book circulation increased 247% in the first month of the pandemic, and new users of e-books and digital audiobooks grew by 449%. We quickly realized the need to reallocate funds and shift staff energy to support community members at home, and to cover the high cost of delivering e-books and audiobooks to residents. We reduced our budget for physical materials by 28% and increased our budget for digital materials by 520%, thanks to one-time and surplus operating funds. Provincial grants (direct and to the BCLC) allowed BPL to add new digital resources, and move on projects to lend laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots. We added Kanopy, a film streaming resource that's been popular with Burnaby residents, and worked with public service staff to ensure they could provide the help patrons needed accessing the full range of digital resources available to them.

When libraries reopened, staff shifted their energy back to physical resources, reducing uncatalogued collections and cataloguing more materials so patrons could place holds. We also increased loan periods for DVDs and magazines to match books, to reduce pressure on borrowers to make frequent trips to library branches. The need to balance both priorities – physical and digital collections was felt in 2020 more so than in any other year. New users of e-books and digital resources levelled off over time, but circulation remains high. In 2020, digital checkouts represented 16% of total circulation at BPL, compared to just 4% of total circulation in 2019. We anticipate increased circulation of physical materials but continuing demand high for e-books and downloadable audiobooks in 2021.

SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic has focused Board and staff on what's really important to our community, and staff have done extraordinary work in adapting to meet the community's changing needs. Burnaby Public Library is more determined than ever to continue work on the goals in our 2019-2022 Strategic Plan and our dream of a welcoming community where all people can explore, learn and connect.

Burnaby Public Library would like to take this opportunity to thank the Government of British Columbia for its ongoing commitment to public libraries and for the financial support we received in 2020.

2020 Library Technology Grant Interim Report

INTRODUCTION

Burnaby Public Library received a one-time grant of \$42,270 from the Ministry of Education in 2020 to be used for planning, developing and improving the library's digital resources and services, and technical infrastructure. We were asked to use this grant to increase equity between communities and enable all citizens to participate in an increasingly digital world. The timing and intent of the grant aligns with the library's community development approach to serving Burnaby residents and we're excited to use this grant to increase access to technology and connectivity at a time when digital inclusion is so critical.

PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES FUNDED BY THIS GRANT

The library technology grant is being used to fund two initiatives that respond to identified community needs:

1. Laptop lending: this \$16,000 project will make laptops available to community members to use inside or outside the library. The library has purchased a laptop to test and has configured it for public use. Next steps include purchasing additional laptops and preparing them to lend.
2. Wi-Fi hotspot lending: this \$25,000 project will make Wi-Fi hotspots available to community members to use at home and on the go. The hotspots will be available for loan to any BPL cardholder without restriction. The library has reached an agreement with an Internet service provider and is in the process of developing lending policies.

A third, smaller project will be determined following further community consultation in early 2021.

RATIONALE

Community need for lendable laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots were identified through work with community partners at the outset of the pandemic. The library has also been

engaged in developing a digital literacy strategy, which has involved consultation with staff and community, and a survey of patrons about their technology needs and interests since the pandemic.

We learned through this work that many residents were disproportionately impacted by the library closure in March. Our library's Wi-Fi sessions were at 50% of normal despite branches being closed, with many residents logging on outside library buildings with their own devices at all hours. Some patrons didn't have access to devices, however, and weren't using the Wi-Fi. When the library reopened for computer use in July, staff were met with patrons who, in some cases, had not been able to check email in months. Some had not connected with friends and family online since the beginning of the pandemic. It was clear that lendable laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots could have lessened the impact on these patrons when libraries closed to the public.

Our libraries are now open seven days a week for computer and Wi-Fi use, but the need to physically distance and limit time indoors means that many members of our community remain underserved. The two projects we've undertaken using the Library Technology Grant will extend connectivity and access beyond library buildings, and align with the provincial strategic priority to improve access for British Columbians.

2020 LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY GRANT REPORTING FORM: BURNABY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Total Technology Grant Amount: \$47, 270

Area of Need	Outcome	Metrics	Strategic Links	Actions	Collaborative Links	Timeframe	Project Budget	In-Kind/Leveraged funds	Comments
<p>Other, please specify</p> <p>Patron loanable devices - laptops</p>	<p>Loanable devices such as laptops help reduce barriers to digital inclusion and equity for patrons who rely on the library for access to computers and internet.</p>	<p>Because this is a new service, there isn't an existing service metric to compare against. This project will, however:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Double the types of computers and available to patrons - Increase the number of computers available to patrons from the current 30 for in-library use only (reduced due to physical distancing) to 70 available in-library or from home - Extend computer access from two hours per day to 28 consecutive days for borrowers <p>Success will be measured by checkouts in 2021 and by feedback received from the community.</p>	<p>Accessible, loanable devices support the provincial strategic priority to improve access for British Columbians.</p>	<p>Purchase laptops to lend to the public.</p>	<p>We partnered with community organizations to understand technology needs in Burnaby, and will work with them again to promote the availability to laptops to community members.</p>	<p>June 2020: Assess community need. Research other libraries' practices around laptop lending.</p> <p>August 2020: Research laptop models and test configuration for public use.</p> <p>December 2020: Purchase full compliment of loanable laptops and set up for public use.</p>	<p>\$16,000</p>	<p>Staff hours to research, purchase and configure devices for public use covered by BPL operating funds.</p>	

<p>Other, please specify</p> <p>Patron loanable devices – Wi-Fi hotspots</p>	<p>Loanable Wi-Fi hotspots extend connectivity in the community. They help reduce barriers to digital inclusion and equity for patrons who rely on the library for internet access.</p>	<p>Because this is a new service, there isn't an existing service metric to compare against. This project will, however:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase access to Wi-Fi from four library locations to any location in and beyond the city - Extend access to Wi-Fi from up to 9 hours per day (current open hours) to 28 consecutive days for borrowers <p>Success will be measured by checkouts in 2021 and by feedback received from the community.</p>	<p>Reliable public connectivity supports the provincial strategic priority to improve access to British Columbians.</p>	<p>Purchase mobile Wi-Fi hotspots and a monthly data plan for 2020-2021.</p>	<p>We partnered with community organizations to understand technology needs in Burnaby, and will work with them again to promote the availability to Wi-Fi hotspots to community members.</p>	<p>April 2020: Assess community need. Research other libraries' practices around Wi-Fi hotspot lending.</p> <p>July 2020: Research mobile Wi-Fi devices and data plans.</p> <p>October 2020: Purchase Wi-Fi hotspots and finalize data plan agreement with an ISP.</p> <p>November 2020: Set up Wi-Fi hotspots for public use.</p>	<p>\$25,000</p>	<p>Staff time to research, purchase and set up devices for public use covered by BPL operating funds.</p>	
<p>Other, please specify</p> <p>To be determined through community consultation</p>	<p>TBD. Possibilities include digital resources aimed at improving digital literacy and technical skills, or other loanable devices that help reduce barriers to digital inclusion.</p>	<p>TBD</p>	<p>TBD</p>	<p>TBD</p>	<p>We are partnering with community organizations to understand technology needs in Burnaby. That work will inform the direction of this third project.</p>	<p>November 2020: Consult with community and review digital literacy strategy for opportunities to increase access to digital services and/or online collections.</p> <p>Q1 2021: Research and launch new service or initiative.</p>	<p>\$6,270</p>	<p>TBD</p>	